

Executive Summary of SD Arts Council/South Dakotans for the Arts/SD Humanities Council Public Hearings/Listening Sessions – June 16, 2008

A total of eleven Listening Sessions (Public Hearings) were held throughout the state:

- Spring 2007 Regional Arts Days in Pierre, Spearfish, Watertown and Yankton
- Tribal Roundtable in January 2008
- Arts Leadership Luncheons and Planning Discussion in the state's largest cities – Aberdeen, Rapid City and Sioux Falls – in May 2008
- Department 2010 Initiative review meetings – Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Watertown – June 2008

Five other Listening Sessions took place:

- A joint planning session of the SD Arts Council and the board of South Dakotans for the Arts in the summer 2007
- Alliance for Arts Education Advisory Council planning meeting in April 2008
- SD Arts Council and board of South Dakotans for the Arts meeting in April 2008 to review the findings of the constituent survey with consultant Craig Dreeszen
- Executive Committees of the SD Arts Council and the SD Humanities Council joint planning session June of 2008
- Community Arts Network Advisory Council planning meeting June 2008

A total of 419 people participated in these 16 Listening Sessions. Following are highlights of issues brought forth on a consistent basis in the Listening Sessions and are addressed in the new long range plan:

1. What are your ideas for strengthening the arts and humanities in our state?

We need to maintain and strengthen existing partnerships that currently exist locally, regionally and statewide.

There is a need to strengthen arts education, pre-K – 12, from the state level down to the local level. Cultural organizations are going to have to take the lead in this process with local school boards and the Department of Education.

Partnering with economic development agencies is critical to involve the business community with a focus on the creative economy and for recruiting new businesses.

Cultural/heritage tourism is the front of many people's mind. There is a need for a cultural/heritage guide for tourists and citizens of the state.

Public awareness is critical for advancing cultural causes in the state. Public awareness campaigns such as the "Arts Alive" campaign are essential.

2. Are there changes you would like to see in how the SD Arts Council, South Dakotans for the Arts and the SD Humanities operate?

More assistance with grant writing was often cited, especially one-on-one assistance with Native American artists and organization.

People would like more chances to network at workshops, meetings and gatherings. A statewide cultural conference should be held in a cycle of every three years.

Overall much praise was given for the funding opportunities provided by the State Arts Council. Often we heard, "Help is only a phone call or an email away."

People want a grant category that would be available for small grants to assist with sudden opportunities that might come up throughout the year, past the grant deadline.

3. What are the most pressing needs for arts and humanities in South Dakota that we can address in the future?

Reaching a younger audience, especially the 25-40 year olds, came up in virtually every listening session. Answers were not abundant, but new young audience development should be explored and implemented.

Technology is important to constituents. A listserv connecting various groups, e-grants and an on-line calendar would be advantageous.

Communication among cultural groups is imperative.

Volunteerism is on the downslide and innovative ways to combat the lack of young volunteers is needed.

4. What are the strengths of arts and humanities programs in South Dakota that we can build upon in the future?

The placement of the State Arts Council in the same Department that houses Economic Development, Tourism, History and Tribal Government Relations is considered a real boost for cultural development.

A very strong Community Arts Network with 110 members, and continuing to grow, is an asset to the state and should be used in every way possible to strengthen the cultural growth of SD.

South Dakota is blessed with excellent artists who need to identify themselves as the driving force of the creative economy in the state.

Further marketing the rich Native American arts and crafts found throughout South Dakota will advance cultural/heritage tourism and benefit artists.

Excellent public awareness is available through the "Arts Alive" publication and Community Arts Network (CAN mail) weekly e-newsletter. We need to work to broaden the audience for these communication vehicles.